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Salisbury Fire Department to Provide Emergency Response Coverage for Asheville

Team of Four Off-Duty Salisbury Firefighters to Assist Asheville Following Loss of Duty Death

Salisbury, NC_August 1, 2011 – Four firefighters from the Salisbury Fire Department will provide emergency response coverage for the City of Asheville, NC on Monday, August 1 and Tuesday, August 2. The off-duty team departed from Salisbury earlier this morning and will return late Tuesday evening. The volunteer support is being offered in response to a request from the Asheville Fire Department following a recent Loss of Duty Death (LODD). Captain Jeff Bowen, a 13-year veteran with the Asheville Fire Department, lost his life during the department's response to a four-alarm fire at the Biltmore Avenue Medical Office building. Bowen, who was searching for anyone left inside, was rushed to Mission Hospital after succumbing to smoke. This tragic LODD marks the first time in nearly three decades that a City of Asheville firefighter has fallen in the line of duty.

Mayor Susan Kluttz said, "Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Captain Jeff Bowen and the Asheville Fire Department. As Salisbury has experienced such a tragic loss, our hearts are filled with genuine compassion and sympathy for the Asheville community. We are proud to provide the support of our dedicated firefighters during this time. The City of Salisbury honors the memory of Captain Jeff Bowen, who offered the ultimate sacrifice so that others might be saved. May Captain Bowen's legacy live on forever in the spirit of those who so valiantly continue to serve."

Salisbury Fire Chief Bob Parnell said, "We are sincerely humbled and proud to provide this support for our brothers at the Asheville Fire Department. Our four-man volunteer team departed for Asheville this morning and includes Captain Mark Thompson, Engineer Tim Grisham, Fire Control Specialist Gray Grubb, and Fire Control Specialist Justin McIntyre. The squad will provide emergency response coverage today and tomorrow so that members of the Asheville Fire Department can attend services for their fallen comrade. Salisbury's response team includes four volunteer members, their necessary fire-fighting tools and equipment, and a reserve fire apparatus. Due to the off-duty nature of the support group, Salisbury Fire Department's high-level of resources remain intact and we continue to be readily available to protect and serve our Salisbury citizens." Parnell adds that Battalion Chief David Morris coordinated the logistics surrounding the Salisbury Fire Department's support for Asheville. "We appreciate the dedication of Chief Morris. By offering this coverage for Asheville, members of their department can pay their last respects to their fallen brother without worry for fire response in their community."

The local contingent departed from Salisbury Fire Station #1 around 8 am this morning and arrived at Asheville Fire Station #1 at approximately 11 am. Fire Captain Mark Thompson will attend a debriefing at approximately 12 noon today. Following today's debriefing, Salisbury's firefighters will staff Asheville Fire Station #3 until late Tuesday evening. Interim City Manager Doug Paris said, "It is our sincere honor to provide this service to the City of Asheville. Our volunteer team offers a testimony to the quiet valor, selfless acts, and sincere heroism that our Salisbury fire, police, and rescue workers provide to our community each day. We extend our sincere condolences to the City of Asheville and to the family and friends of Captain Bowen."

The Salisbury Fire Department currently operates four fire stations and employs seventy-six full-time personnel. The department receives additional support from nine part-time firefighters. The City of Salisbury is an equal opportunity employer with over 180 different job classifications and 400 full time positions. For more information regarding the City of Salisbury and its services and departments, please visit us on the web at www.salisburync.gov. To receive updates regarding local initiatives, meetings, programs, and events, please join the City of Salisbury's Facebook users group at www.salisburync.gov/facebook or follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/CitySalisburyNC>.

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